

EXHIBIT 20

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION,)
et al.,)

Plaintiffs,)

v.)

ALBERTO R. GONZALES, in his official)
capacity as Attorney General of the United)
States,)

Defendant.)

Civil Action No.
98-CV-5591

**SALON MEDIA GROUP INC. RESPONSES AND OBJECTIONS TO DEFENDANT'S
FIRST SET OF INTERROGATORIES**

Pursuant to Rules 26 and 33 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiff Salon Media Group Inc. ("Plaintiff") responds and objects to Defendant Alberto R. Gonzales's First Set of Interrogatories ("Interrogatories") as follows:

GENERAL OBJECTIONS

1. Plaintiff objects to the Interrogatories to the extent the instructions and demands therein purport to impose obligations in addition to, beyond, or different from those set forth in the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and the Rules of Civil Procedure of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.
2. Plaintiff objects to the Interrogatories to the extent they call for the identification or disclosure of information that is neither relevant to the claims and defenses of any party in this action nor reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence. Plaintiff submits these responses and objections without conceding the relevance or materiality of the subject matter of any interrogatory.

INTERROGATORY NO. 13

For each website plaintiff, identify a representative sample of webpages on your website which contains material about which you fear prosecution under COPA, as referenced in Paragraph 2 in the section titled "The Impact of COPA on Plaintiffs" on page 24 of the Amended Complaint that "[P]laintiffs fear prosecution under COPA for communicating, sending, displaying, or distributing material that might be deemed 'harmful to minors' by some community in the United States."

RESPONSE TO INTERROGATORY NO. 13

Plaintiff objects that this Interrogatory is premature, unreasonably cumulative and duplicative of Document Request No. 1, and calls for identification of information that is in the public domain. Plaintiff also objects that the phrases used to define "representative sample," including "distribution of characteristics," "degree of explicitness of sexual content," and "population or universe" are vague and ambiguous. Subject to the foregoing and to the General Objections, Plaintiff refers to the web content identified in the Amended Complaint and responds as follows:

1) <http://dir.salon.com/topics/sex/index.html> (last viewed October 23, 2005) and the links accessible therein contain, articles discussing, among other things, various forms of sexual contact and activity, human genitalia, and human sexuality generally;

2) <http://dir.salon.com/topics/sexuality/index.html> (last viewed October 23, 2005) and the links accessible therein contain, articles discussing, among other things, various forms of sexual contact and activity, human genitalia, and human sexuality generally;

3) <http://dir.salon.com/topics/homosexuality/index.html> (last viewed October 23, 2005) and the links accessible therein contain, articles discussing, among other things, various forms of sexual contact and activity, human genitalia, and human sexuality generally;

4) <http://dir.salon.com/topics/gay/index.html> (last viewed October 23, 2005) and the links accessible therein contain, articles discussing, among other things, various forms of sexual contact and activity, human genitalia, and human sexuality generally;

5) <http://dir.salon.com/topics/lesbians/index.html> (last viewed October 23, 2005) and the links accessible therein contain, articles discussing, among other things, various forms of sexual contact and activity, human genitalia, and human sexuality generally;

6) http://dir.salon.com/topics/oral_sex/index.html (last viewed October 23, 2005) and the links accessible therein contain, articles discussing, among other things, various forms of sexual contact and activity, human genitalia, and human sexuality generally;

7) <http://www.salon.com/dialogue/> (last viewed October 27, 2005) and the links accessible therein contain or may contain in the future, among other things, candid and explicit comments or questions on a diverse category of topics posted directly by Internet web users.

INTERROGATORY NO. 14

For each website plaintiff, identify a representative sample of webpages on your website which you believe contains material that has serious literary, artistic, political, scientific and/or social value for adults.

RESPONSE TO INTERROGATORY NO. 14

Plaintiff objects to the extent this Interrogatory calls for the identification of information that is neither relevant to the claims and defenses of any party in this action nor reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence. COPA does not take into

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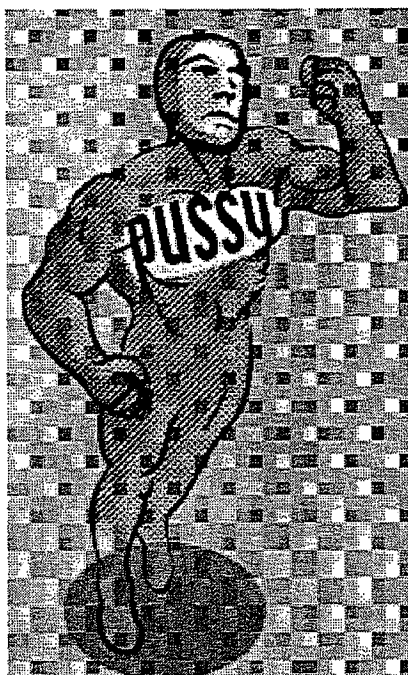
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You pussy!

If ever there was a word in need of rehab, it is this feline expletive reserved for wimps.

By Margot Magowan

Feb. 28, 2001 |
 "What a pussy!" shouted my friend Joe. He was complaining to me about a business partner who backed out of a deal at the last

minute. Joe wanted sympathy, but I was snagged on the word "pussy."

The night before Joe's outburst, I'd been channel surfing and caught Barbara Walters interviewing Jane Fonda about her performance in Eve Ensler's wildly successful play, "The Vagina Monologues."

"You can't talk about vaginas," Fonda said to Walters, "and not talk about this remarkable ability they have to give birth. It's awesome. If penises could do what vaginas could do, they'd be on postage stamps. I mean, vaginas are absolutely extraordinary."

Listening to Fonda, I thought, "We *have* come a long way, baby." Just a few years ago, producers forbade actress Cybill Shepherd to utter the V-word on her own TV show. It was, they said, obscene.

I noted the further progress of female genitalia in



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mainstream media when I spotted fresh-faced actress Claire Danes sporting a "V-Day" T-shirt on the cover of March's issue of Marie Claire, in which women like Brooke Shields, Marisa Tomei and Calista Flockhart were asked, among other things: If your vagina could talk, what would it say, and if it could wear clothes, what would it wear?

So pussy power was in the air when Joe launched his diatribe. Suddenly it struck me as wrong that the word "pussy" is used to imply cowardice or ineffectiveness. Why must we equate weakness with the female sex organ? Why have we for so long?

I began to wonder how one -- how we -- might take the wussy out of pussy.

Is it possible to change the meaning of the word, to restore to "pussy" its deserved glory? Could we use pussy as a compliment? Could pussy denote someone or something as cool or heroic or impressive? "Rosa Parks -- what a pussy!" or "John McCain is way pussy!" or "New York is a big ol' pussy!"

At the moment, "pussy" isn't even used to slight women directly. It is reserved for men, used among them to make fun of one another. It's "sissy" for male heteros. It's the politically correct big boy's way of calling somebody a fag. And, please, don't get me started on "pussy-whipped."

People say "dick," they say "asshole," they say "prick," but they do it with respect. Those words have power and punch, the way the word "cunt" has power. But "cunt" makes people shudder; they judge, perhaps wrongly, the user of the word. Meanwhile, poor "pussy" lies there limp, pathetic and, until this moment, defenseless.

Enslar does a fabulous soliloquy to "cunt" in "The Vagina Monologues." Perched on a stool in her black cocktail dress, barefoot, throwing back her head, shaking her Louise Brooks haircut, she says the word "cunt" for about 10 minutes, obviously relishing each repetition. But what does she say about pussy? If she said anything, I couldn't remember. Is pussy so forgettable?

To find answers -- and to solicit allies in rehabilitating the word -- I went to novelist and essayist Erica Jong, a pioneer in reclaiming language in her own writing, and a recent star of "The Vagina Monologues."

Jong told me that there are, in fact, a couple of references to pussy in the "Monologues," though they're mostly humorous, such as "Don't let him tell you it smells like roses when it's supposed to smell like pussy!"

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By Sarah Karnasiewicz
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She thinks changing the popular meaning of the word is possible. "If we use it with positive intent, it will become positive," she said. "I really don't know how long it will take. Language changes, but changes slowly. It depends on the usage -- whether the new connotation catches on."

Jong warned it wouldn't be easy. "My feeling is that we're on the verge of reclaiming 'cunt,' a fine old Middle English word, but we're not there yet with 'pussy,'" said Jong. "Pussy remains humorous, if not insulting. At the moment pussy is a laugh word. It always gets them rolling on the floors in 'Vagina.'"

Jong suggested I go to the vagina mama herself, Ensler, to ask her advice.

"I like the sound of 'pussy,'" Ensler told me, smiling. "I think it's a good word."

She agreed that it's different from cunt. "A cunt is someone who dreams the big dream. You are ambitious. You want to go the distance." Hillary Rodham Clinton, she told me, is a cunt.

Pussy, she said, is more personal. "Pussy is wet, juicy and inviting. It could be used as a word of empowerment or honor. It's a feisty word. There's a little fear, a little danger there -- you better be nice if you want my pussy."

Pussy has so much potential, it's a shame to limit it to the immature and derisive mocking of weak boys. Let's give it a shot in the arm! I envision hit songs featuring "pussy" -- "Who Let the Pussies Out?" or "The Real Slim Pussy" or "The Real Shady Pussy." Hallmark-type cards that read "Thanks for being such a pussy!" Colloquial expressions: "You da pussy!" "Stand up and fight like a pussy!"

And when, and if, Joe consummates his next business deal, I'll be there to toast him, saying, "You're *so* pussy."

Flattered, he'll smile.

salon.com

About the writer

Margot Magowan is a writer in San Francisco and co-founder of the Woodhull Institute. As part of her campaign to rehabilitate the word "pussy," she has a "Team Pussy" Web

[site.](#)

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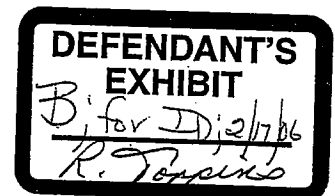
I was introduced to the IDEA of pornography in three different ways. For starters, I knew it was a men's club thing, boys only, no girls allowed unless you show your titties. I imagined it was a bunch of Type A bullies, chauvinist to the bone, who couldn't look at a girl without reducing her to a bra size. "Porn exploits women" -- isn't that the first thing a young lady learns about the cold cruel world? It's a synonym for Men Use Women in the most calculating way.

Second, I knew pornography was a business with a capital B. Millions of dollars were said to be made at it; it was an industry with a lingam instead of a smokestack, blowing clouds of jizz and peep-show quarters.

Finally, I thought that the porn industry started at cheesy, moved on to gross, and ended at its logical resting place: the snuff film.

My real-world introduction to porn started with these thoughts in my head, and the whole mess was so intimidating to me that I would never have taken a peek into it myself -- if my new girlfriend, Honey, hadn't gotten a job working as a cashier at the Market Street Cinema, a big porn theater in downtown San Francisco that featured live strippers and classic X-rated movies.

When Honey came home from work, she told me that the whole place smelled really bad, and that she



could chain-smoke her entire shift. She said there were some girls who were beautiful working there, some of them with mouths as smart as their stage whips, and some so sad you wanted to cry. The next week she told me she went to change the light bulb in the ladies' john, and when she unscrewed the lamp fixture, somebody's dirty works fell on her head.

One afternoon, Honey called me up from the theater and said, "You've really got to come down here, they're showing an incredible film, 'Desire for Men.'" She said that the featured actress was a blonde named Long Jeanne Silver, a woman with a peg leg. I said I'd be right down.



My first revelation about porn movies was that they were, in fact, movies. I don't know why -- all the hysteria about how bad they were, how dehumanizing -- but it was genuinely a shock to

me to see a full-length feature with real actors and real drama, sexual drama, unfolding before me. They weren't just bodies, they opened their mouths; and you could tell this one came from Queens, and this one was a surfer, and this one was a little brat, and this fellow was so full of himself it was almost endearing. Sometimes the director had the gods with him, and I actually got drawn into the little story or setup he was creating. Sometimes I could tell it was all they could do to get the sex act on film. But then when the sex did happen -- cock entering cunt, tongue licking ass, faces all crazy when they came -- my goodness, docudramas don't get any realer than this! The put-up-or-shut-up authenticity of it all was audacious, it was radical.

Another thing I could see about porn -- and this has changed a lot since video took over -- was that it was far less formulaic than Hollywood or television in some ways. Long Jeanne Silver was only the beginning of an endless list of actresses who had every physical attribute under the sun. You can look like whatever you are and be a porn star.

Directors also had their little stamp; they were instantly recognizable, every one an auteur. They had this crass list of what kind of sex had to be in

the film, but other than the "position" agenda, they were on their own voyage. Some directors had a social message they were determined to get in, along with the fucking and sucking. Some were clearly in love with one of the players, and built the film around their infatuation. Some thought they were producing the cinematic follow-up to "Sympathy for the Devil." Others obviously had a wonderful time doing all that blow and dope, and just wanted to show you what a great party you missed. Many porn directors are cinematographers who simply have an undying love affair with their lens. I'll never forget the time a close friend of mine in the business pointed out a porn film that I'd enjoyed tremendously called "3 AM," and said of the director, "He was Orson Welles' cameraman for 15 years."

I was not consciously aroused the first time I went to a porn theater. For one thing, I was shocked by the quality; for another, I was terrified that one of the paying customers at the theater was going to molest me. I was once felt up by some jerk when I was 14, at a screening of "The Lady and the Tramp" that I attended by myself, so I just sort of multiplied the consequences of going from a Disney flick to a smut screen. At the very least, I feared that the seat I chose in the dark would inevitably turn out to be covered with cold, wet come. My girlfriend lent me a flashlight.

As it happens, the men in the theater were much more frightened of me than I was of them. They scattered from every row I approached; I began to see that their eyes held the frankly paranoid delusion that I had been sent by someone -- their wife? their boss? -- to spy on them. The most disgusting aspect of a porn theater is what an assembly of closet cases the audience is. Everyone is deadly quiet, except for the popcorn crunching and the breathing of those in the back getting blow jobs from their brethren. When something funny happened in the movie, which was quite common, I would laugh out loud -- and completely alone. In all my time in porn theaters, strip joints, and peep shows -- and believe me, I've logged as many hours as any raincoater you'll ever meet -- I have only been spoken to, in a conversational way, two or three times. I have to hand it to the first guy who

approached me -- he got right to the point: "Why are you here?"

In the beginning, I wasn't sure why I was there. I was crazy about movies, and I thought porn had really gotten a raw deal, being so unwelcome in normal dinner table conversations. I was really in love with my girlfriend; I thought she was a genius and a great adventurer. And I was a feminist working in a "feminist vibrator store" where we were so politically correct that we didn't carry anything that looked like a penis (at least not in front of the counter), and when our customers asked us about "erotica," we really didn't have a clue how to advise them. I felt it was my professional and political duty to find out what and where all the good dirty movies were.

But the other concern, in the back of my mind, was that I wondered if I was capable of being aroused by pictures, still or moving, of people in the act of sexual abandon. I had no experience of it. I certainly had been frightened by those kinky Polaroids I found when I was a child, and I had pawed through Playboys I found at my father's house, but they were more like anatomy lessons to me, of cheesecake that I could admire or wonder about. They never made me reach down and touch myself.

Reading, on the other hand, reading sexy stories, was my very, very favorite way of getting off. I had mastered the art of holding a book and turning the pages with one hand while fingering my clit with the other. Those words on the page, the Penthouse letters in all their "needless to say" glory -- just thinking about the font that those letters were set in makes me all creamy with nostalgia. I had my favorite fantasies, and when I saw them in print, it was like a direct line to my orgasm. I had never had that experience with living color photography.

Now my girlfriend had several jobs, one of them as the porn cashier and another as a banquet waitress working out of a union hiring hall. She was about the only woman working in a crew of the most unbelievable set of queens you'd ever hope to meet in the Tenderloin. One of her favorite work partners was named Victor -- rest in peace, my friend -- a

Texas immigrant and totally devout Catholic who carried two books in his satchel: a leather-bound Bible, and a paperback copy of a little classic called "How to Enlarge Your Penis." Victor thought I was beautiful, he thought I had the figure of Marilyn Monroe. He gave me pearls for my birthday, and one day, after some outrageous fight he'd had with a lover, he decided to move all of his belongings into storage, and asked if I would like to "borrow" his big-screen TV/VCR. He left me a few videos, too, all "straight" -- since, par for the course, Victor had no voyeuristic interest in watching gay male performances, only men with women.

The first movie I watched at home was some sort of sailboat orgy fiesta. I was excited before I even pressed the PLAY button, because I'd made sure no one was at home, and I felt altogether uninhibited -- much more free and comfortable than in the Market Street movie palace.

I watched the couple on the sailboat giggle and take their clothes off, but I couldn't make out any dialogue -- Victor's audio system seemed to be hopelessly broken. "Mrwarrrr rahhdgh blehhh," went the girl who proffered her ass to the camera. This was getting annoying. I didn't feel the least bit attracted to anything. I poked the STOP button and felt like slapping somebody. Then I made a very important move, so dreamily and intuitively that I couldn't have told you where I thought it would lead. I plugged in my vibrator, put it in my lap, and pushed PLAY again. The same idiots frolicked under the sails; the camera moved close to the fat guy's cock; it was enormous, purple veins, the whole deal. Then we moved to the girl's behind, all plump and spanky, her hands reached behind to pull her cheeks apart, and she had a forest of dark hair running up her cunt to her ass. There were drops of something on her pussy hair, it was matted in places, wet. The camera and the stud moved closer to her, one of them expertly parted her thighs and lifted her a little with one hand, and right then, just with the tip, the purple cock slid in. My clit jumped like an alarm clock.

I never would have felt it if the vibrator hadn't been humming against me. You have to remember, above the neck I was watching this silly trash and

saying, "What a piece of silly trash!" But when his cock touched her, the opening of her wet lips, the words flashed across my mind's eye -- he's fucking her from behind -- and I came like a bullet.

Well, of course, the first time is always a little bit special. I don't remember the name of the movie, which is so much like the anonymous heroism of porn -- you never learn the name of the person who saves you. Many porn flicks later, I would find that I was a sucker for any sort of rear approach -- don't even bother trying to figure it out, it's just another point of light in my thousands of irrational fantasies, but the first time was such an illumination. I had only succeeded in turning off my intellectual doubts and disdain by turning a Hitachi Magic Wand directly onto my clit. God, no wonder so many people are impervious to arguments about the value of pornography -- clearly, it sometimes takes a physical intervention!

My confrontation with Victor's gigantic screen was the equivalent of Newton's apple: I began to connect the dots. I saw in my own body how inexplicable sensations could happen from seeing pictures that triggered my fantasies, and that I only relished these things when I felt uninhibited, without anyone watching or judging me. I could see how porn formulas were essentially a shotgun approach to hitting a number of broad sexual scenes, hoping that somewhere along the line the viewers would find where their erotic mind met a single frame -- and voilà! That's the secret of the pause button and the instant replay.

What I perceived was the Pink Elephant of the pornography discussion: What turns you on may not match your artistic values, your romantic choices in real life, your political views, but it is just as much a part of you, just as real and substantial, as any other aspect. It's not a defect or a weakness, it's your intuitive ability to take all that's unbearable and crazy and unspeakable about life and turn it into juice -- eroticism. Don't you dare go around with your nose in the air pretending that anybody's fantasies are low-class or despicable, because without that juice you wouldn't be alive, wouldn't be able to discriminate; you'd be a stranger both to your capacities and your limits.

Pornography is like four-letter words -- an unaccepted language that exists in every tongue in the world, the first to be expressed and the first to be suppressed. Here's your world without porn -- a world without sex, without creation. Expressing sex is always the first way we try to communicate, and it leaves its marks everywhere. Look at every technological innovation in communications, from cave drawings to the printing press to giant VCRs to the Internet.

Porn has been more of an inspiration to me than I could have guessed when I first accepted the dare to walk on its turf. I looked, criticized, gasped, and got my rocks off. But my interest went way beyond my hormones. Before I knew it, reading other people's sexual bodies became as revealing and mind-bending to my world as only the greatest works of art can be. Eventually, I had to roll my own -- make my own erotic creations in print, with my crummy camera and my friends who believed as I did, that a pornographic sisterhood was potent stuff. We didn't know what we were doing, we hadn't one clue, but you know what? In the pornographic imagination, not knowing what you're doing gets awfully close to the truth.

March 18, 1997



Excerpted from "Susie Bright's Sexual State of the Union," copyright 1997 by Susie Bright. Published by Simon & Schuster. Printed by permission. Another excerpt from the book appears in the March issue of Playboy magazine.

What do you think of Susie Bright's views on porn?
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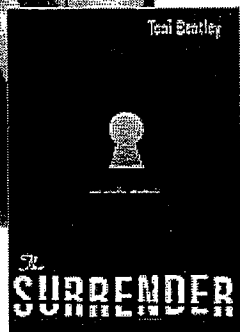
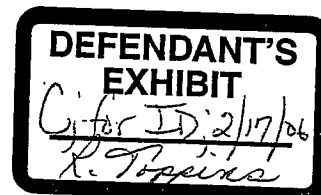
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Rectal romance

"You open your ass and you open your mind and you open your heart." Toni Bentley talks about her new anal sex memoir, "The Surrender."

By Rebecca Traister



Oct. 8, 2004 | As a young woman, Toni Bentley danced with the New York City Ballet, and made a second career writing well-reviewed books about it. She knew George Balanchine and co-wrote Suzanne Farrell's autobiography, and she can delicately describe the agony of toeshoes and the psychological rigors of the barre. Now she has turned her literary attention to another activity that stretches body, mind and psyche: sodomy.

In "The Surrender," her 205-page "erotic memoir," by Page 26 Bentley has dispatched with her first orgasm (after French erotica on the Upper East Side), the loss of her vaginal virginity (to a man who tells her, "You've got a great ass"), an affair with a stagehand who has her sit on his face, and a 10-year marriage. She then sits back and luxuriates in her chronicle of her post-marriage sexual experimentation. There is her cunnilingus-heavy affair with a masseur she continues to pay, her appreciation for "Pussy Hounds" or men "who live to dive," and repeated threesomes with a Pre-Raphaelite redheaded woman and a "Young Man," who later gets a new epithet, "A-Man." A-Man is the lover who introduces Bentley to anal intercourse, the act that gives "The Surrender," and Bentley herself, a soul.

In addition to enjoying the physical act itself -- which she finds "unwinds" the lower bowels -- the atheist Bentley insists that she found a spiritual ecstasy in buggery. She has been to the mountain and seen God; and apparently, He likes it from behind. Despite her mad love for A-Man -- evidenced in no small part by the fact that she keeps the condoms-and-K-Y detritus of their unions and a baggy-full of his pubic hair in a little memory box -- Bentley staunchly resists a traditional commitment to him. The lovers do not meet outside the bedroom: no monogamy, no dating, no shared friends, no movies or meals. In fact, the only food they consume together is the occasional restorative snack between back-door intrusions. By the end of the book, A-Man is history, and leveled Bentley is left to sort out her altered body, desires and devotions.

Even though it won't officially be available until next week, the book has, not surprisingly, garnered a lot of attention. Bentley, speaking to Salon by phone from Los Angeles, spoke quickly and kindly and actually sounded quite shy as she discussed anal hygiene, the costs of monogamy, and her conviction that her book will anger feminists.

Your book is a memoir of anal sex. You describe your first time as surprising and ecstatic, not something you stretched for, worked up to. So ... no searing pain?

You want the technical description? I use explicit language in the book, in a literary context, but using that language out of context can be disheartening to me.

But no, it was absolutely not searing pain. It was astonishing. He was very slow and very gentle and very loving and nothing was against my will and this was a very consensual act between two people. The most important part of the act technically is slowness, and most men don't know how to do it properly. Men usually move too fast with the other kind of sex. And you have to go way slower [with anal penetration]. The muscles are tighter.

"You could eat off my asshole," you write, describing your ritual ablutions. Can it be true that you did not see, touch or smell shit during the 298 anal penetrations you describe? Is that a realistic expectation for most people?

It's true. I am a regular woman. I don't want lots of pain, lots of bleeding, and I certainly don't want lots of shit everywhere. You can help by being extremely hygienic, having good digestion ... But no, there was absolutely zero shit factor. If there had been I wouldn't have done it.

Now, I don't think that's true for all people. Some people are even into it being not like that. But I am bearing witness to my own experience and saying that it *can* be the way it was for me. All those gross-out factors were completely absent.

I didn't set out to write a book about sex or anal sex at all. I had an experience, started keeping notes. I was fascinated that I had this incredibly emotional and spiritual reaction to this act. The edge is fascinating to me. It's the juxtaposition of the so-called high and low.

What's high and what's low about sodomy?

I completely understand that anal sex to many people, whether they love it or not, may be the most taboo sex act or the basest sex act there is. You're going in the exit, a place you're not supposed to talk about, that you're ashamed of, where you defecate. People have a dirty association with it.

Yet I had the most transcendent sexual experience from going there many times. I started reading about it ... It started making so much sense: the contradiction of [going] in the back door. That Oscar Wilde line about being in the gutter but looking at the stars. It was also about not being a snob, of not thinking, I won't go there. It's vulgar. Balanchine believed in putting yourself out there and when I danced, I couldn't do that. I was too shy and modest as a dancer.

How is the pleasure of anal sex different from the pleasure of vaginal sex?

First of all, the g-spot can absolutely be stimulated from your ass. But to me it's much more than that. There is a great deal more trust. Because it could hurt, it could hurt like crazy. You have to be willing and open-minded in a way you simply don't have to be with vaginal sex. It's pretty easy for a guy to get in [a vagina] whether a woman wants it or not.

But it is a much more extreme physical feeling to release your muscles. We have very strong muscles there; we all know that from what we usually do there. To release it, you open your ass and you open your mind and you open your heart. For me it opened everything.

I cannot accentuate enough that it was with this one particular man. It's absolutely not that I am a woman who loves anal sex. I loved anal sex with this man who I loved. And I think most of us women know a lot of men who would like to go there, and I've said no as many times as anyone else. It takes a very gentle man to do it. A lot of men are not up to it.

At the end of your book, you have only had anal sex with one other man. Now, years later, have you had other anal relationships?

I would rather not talk about my personal life.

But you write in the book about your unwillingness to ask A-Man to commit. If you loved him so much why didn't you want to make him a committed, monogamous part of your life?

I considered all of these things. I learned things about the magic we had between us. What creates that magic is very complex ... And it only got better. [A-Man and I] discussed this: How come time 250 is better than time 249? Most committed, monogamous relationships are good for a week or six months, or if you're really lucky six years. I did not have any girlfriends who were having as reliably and transcendently good sex as I was. And if we had a conventional movies-and-dinner relationship, I thought we would lose the magic.

I am not selling this type of relationship. I had a long and monogamous marriage to a man I loved very much. It didn't work out, and my disappointment was unbelievably huge ... I didn't want the same kind of heartbreak again. With A-Man, the sex never went bad. To me that's some kind of victory. My tolerance for certain kinds of disappointment is very low and will probably never improve. So perfection is what's strived for. That's from ballet. I saw it manifesting itself while watching Suzanne Farrell ... Transcendent things can happen in life.

But you did experience devastation when your relationship with A-Man ended?

You cannot go that high without going that low. I was devastated, but I survived. It lasted an incredibly long time at an incredibly high level. I took a huge risk with him in not being monogamous, and got extreme and incredible sex that made all other sex incredibly profane in comparison. We had sacred sex.

But now that you're not having sacred sex anymore, is all other sex still profane? Do you enjoy vaginal sex?

Oh sure, I love that too. That's great like everybody knows it's great. This was a different realm, an emotionally different realm.

Do you think feminists are going to be ticked off by your book?

My book owes everything to the feminist movement. I am a product of that. I am a woman who had this experience that was very unconventional ... I am interested in my sex: in experiencing it and in the powers it holds for me. I am interested in our freedoms: You're a woman and I'm a woman having this conversation about this kind of book -- this is fantastic! But I think some women will protest the obvious things that I am talking about: submitting or surrender. I say feminism gave me the freedom to submit. Isn't this what we all want from feminism? The ability to choose conventional monogamy is a great option but not the only option.

And my ability to submit -- I wouldn't have been a woman who could have done that even 10 or 20 years ago.

Why not?

I tried what most women do: monogamy. I have never been unfaithful to any man who thought I was being faithful to him. It's a point of integrity for me.

So I had the more conventional type of relationship until I left my marriage and began experimenting with many things. But I don't think [anal sex] would have had resonance if I had been 23 years old. It was a very

sophisticated tightrope walk. It came from incredible mutual respect. Nobody begged each other, nobody nagged each other; we never talked about compromising for the greater good.

There were limitations, yes. We didn't have a commitment, but what that means I don't know. Most people who have a commitment don't have what we had, which happened incredibly consistently until we ended it. I have a great dislike for relationships [where] you get so close you start yelling and screaming at each other, blaming each other. He and I never did that. I would have never yelled at him; he would have never yelled at me.

You write that submitting to A-Man brought out your femininity. What is feminine to you? What is masculine?

I suppose I think of it in terms of energies; all men and women have both masculine and feminine energies. The feminine side in a man or woman is the more open, intuitive, feeling, sensitive, vulnerable, receptive side. And the male side in both men and women would be the more aggressive, analytical, penetrating, knowledgeable, intellectual side.

In relationships it's about how people play off each other. A very feminine woman and a very feminine man -- maybe you should go off and be gay. I don't believe you are going to be able to have fantastic sex that way. You need polarized energies. Of course if a man is 100 percent masculine they're sort of Neanderthals and you can't talk to them. But in my relationship with A-man where I became my most feminine sexually, he was the most masculine of anyone I'd ever been with. I wanted him in control, which was an incredible relief to me.

The huge problem is you cannot give just anyone control. To give that up to some guy? On the whole you'd be a fool. He has to be trustworthy.

But it was the biggest relief I ever felt. Obviously I am an intelligent woman, a successful woman. I have written all these books, danced for George Balanchine. I know all about control and the ultimate act for me is to be able to give that up. It was the greatest gift to me to be able to be some kind of melting essence and not have to control the situation, not have to dictate, not have to be on top technically and otherwise.

You refer to anal sex as one of the last taboos. The New York Times' review of your book pointed to necrophilia and cannibalism as other examples. I'm looking at the Web site of a guy who claims to have a loving and mutual sexual relationship with a dolphin. What's one taboo over the line for you?

I do not believe in the abuse or humiliation of animals. They are noble, natural, innocent creatures who should not be abused by humans doing their thing sexually. Otherwise, I am open-minded. Beyond the animals. If that's your thing, that's your thing, as long as it's consensual.

You pin your awakening on anal sex. But you also write that oral sex with your masseur -- whom you paid -- changed your life.

The masseur was a very big steppingstone in my coming-out party. He was the first lover I had after my marriage. And it was also completely based on mutual respect. There was never going to be intercourse, and I started developing this idea of the erotic having boundaries: no telephone, no mortgage bills, no cars that need fixing, no mutual friends, no family. We were hermetically sealed in this erotic space where you do your thing with each other. It was great until it was over, until he and I just moved on. It became one of my developing theories: put limitations on things, make it a balancing act and tradeoff. I would rather have great sex than bad or no sex with a dinner companion.

It sounds more like lowering expectations than demanding perfection.

It is about making expectations lower. The idea being, let them be who they are without trying to change everything. Just try to let all the good exist and don't go where you'll be disappointed. If I wanted a full-on, monogamous, going-on-vacation relationship with the masseur, it wouldn't have worked. I probably would have

been in pain and disappointed and incredibly angry with him, which isn't pleasant for me, and not loving to him.

Can you talk a bit about the connections you make in the book between being anally penetrated and finding God?

This act took me to a place emotionally and mentally that I would call of a spiritual realm. The best way to say it is that I went beyond my own ego, and most of us are mired in ego 24/7: all the constant self-criticism, self-love, self-loathing.

While having this kind of sex [with A-Man] I went beyond this voice in my head and beyond all control. And I write in the book, beyond control lies God.

Giving up control is a profound thing. Who you do it with and the context of it is crucial. I transcended my own smaller, pettier self, transcended my own self-hatred, incredible neediness, incredible need for approval. I went beyond that and was kind of like free-floating in space or something. That is what I call the experience of God.

The other way one can talk about this is, I was profoundly, profoundly in love with this man.

You write about moving through pain to pleasure. You even use the word "masochist" in the book. Is anal sex a masochistic pleasure?

It's not that I want to hurt. I don't want to be in pain, emotional or physical, more than anyone else. But I do have a deep connection to pain, both as a dancer and -- how can I explain this -- it's really hard to explain. I won't let a guy near me who doesn't treat me like a queen, I can promise you. Yet to be very submissive, to have this kind of sex act repeatedly with this man. One can call that masochistic. But there was zero bad about it.

I was more vulnerable with him than I'd ever been with anyone else. That's also why it was so painful at the end. I really went very, very deeply into vulnerability and that dark side because I trusted him.

The other thing about masochism is that if it is defined as being intensely receptive and open, then that is going back to male/female traits, because that is a feminine place to be -- to be the ones who get penetrated vaginally or otherwise.

But your argument that you were feminine falls apart when you consider that you took these acts and wrote them down and are talking about them now: an analytical, intellectually penetrative act that you would ascribe to a masculine energy.

That's true actually. Here I am with this book ... the phallic pen and all that. Who knows, it's possible I went so deeply into my submission that a strange balance brought out the other part. It's very possible that in many ways writing was counterbalance to the vulnerability and the way I kept control.

Also, you know we all have that question: Who's on top, who's on the bottom, who's in control?

In S/M, they say the bottom is in control.

About the writer

Rebecca Traister is a staff writer for Salon Life.

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By Josh Max [2006-06-22]



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By Sarah Karnasiewicz [2006-04-27]



A marked woman

When I decided to get a tattoo with a man I'd only known for two weeks, my children worried I'd lost my mind. But I knew that whether it was in ink or emotions, love would always leave me scarred.

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By day, my boyfriend acted cold and distant. But at night, after popping his pill, he transformed into the affectionate man of my dreams.

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MetroDaddy speaks!

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"The Only Girl in the Car" by Kathy Dobie

In this remarkable memoir, a former '70s teen "slut" looks back on the mysteries of adolescent sex and the female quest for freedom.

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In search of her father's girlhood

Noelle Howey, author of "Dress Codes: Of Three Girlhoods -- My Mother's, My Father's, and Mine," discusses sexuality, angora and life with a transgender parent.

By Amy Benfer [2002-07-03]

False accusations, bad boys and stripping Christians

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[2002-05-24]

Go out and get a piece, son!

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A former sex columnist answers the most common masturbation questions and wonders why it's still taboo to talk about what we all do.

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How the Web has changed access to sex information -- and the kind of advice people seek. Second of two parts.

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Rebecca Chalker wants to return our attention to the part of a woman's body that's all about pleasure. Plus: A rant about "vagina night."

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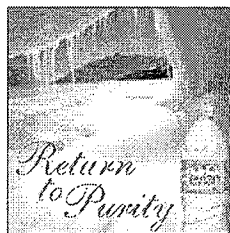
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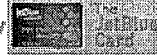
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Playoffs are over, let's turn to baseball. Oh, Ozzie Guillen's insulting people again. Plus: World Cup scoring update.

[2006-06-22]



It's a girl!

The election of a woman to head the American Episcopal Church is a challenge to purity movements that seek to exclude gays and other "outcasts."

By Sara Miles and Paul Fromberg [2006-06-19]



If my wife dressed better, would gay guys stop hitting on me?

I'm a snappy dresser, and the other night, my wife and I were hanging out in this gay bar ...

By Cary Tennis [2006-03-27]

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[2005-11-02]

Rome's latest witch hunt won't stop with gays

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"Queer Eye" in the clubhouse: The Red Sox have never been so boring, but Kevin Millar happily shouting, "I am now gay" can only be a good thing.

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Emile Griffith was a champion and one tragic time a literal killer in the ring. Outside of it, he was a charming enigma, possibly gay. USA Network tells his riveting story in "Ring of Fire."

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Americans are confused about gays in sports, but one expert says the first man out of the closet will be cheered. Plus: Yanks-Sox tempest in a Fenway teapot. And: A fabulous farewell.

[2005-04-15]

A divider, not a uniter

The charismatic Pope John Paul II chose not to engage all Catholics, and so leaves a tragic legacy of missed opportunity that has ultimately damaged the church.

By Frances Kissling [2005-04-04]

Compassionate conservative

John Paul II has been appropriated by the American right. But his "culture of life" was not the same as theirs.

By Amy Sullivan [2005-04-02]

Scrooge's nightmare

Despite Bush's election, the cranky old conservatives' days are numbered. The future belongs to middle-aged boomers and their kids, who embrace the tolerant values of the '60s.

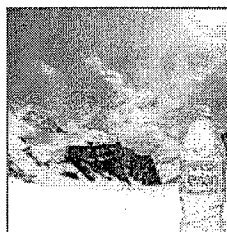
By Leonard Steinhorn [2004-11-25]

Not just a socialite, but a gritty survivor

Susan Mary Alsop, who died last month, faced a personal crisis when the KGB tried to smear her influential columnist husband, Joseph. A friend recalls her courage in the face of that ordeal.

By Edwin M. Yoder Jr. [2004-09-28]

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Don't write Rick Santorum into the Constitution

The Federal Marriage Amendment goes to Senate vote today -- and it shouldn't go silently.

Lynn Harris [2006-06-07]



San Franciscophobia

We're stuck with a terrible war and a worse president, and all the GOP can do is scream, "Pelosi and her Nancy boys are coming"? This is pathetic.

By Garrison Keillor [2006-06-07]

The gay boogeyman's gonna git ya!

A gay scare film that could've come straight from the Bush White House!

K.L. [2006-06-05]

"Dear Mr. Leno: Gay people, to you, are great material"

"Avenue Q" writer takes Jay Leno to task.

Lynn Harris [2006-04-26]



White's albums

Rejecting Freudian analysis and embracing his true identity, Edmund White penned two landmarks of gay literature and redefined the autobiographical novel.

By Allen Barra [2006-04-26]

Lesbian, gay families to celebrate Easter on White House lawn

Parents plan to wear rainbow-colored Hawaiian leis to traditional egg roll.

Katharine Mieszkowski [2006-04-14]

We are "natural family"

The Kanab, Utah, City Council adds bigotry to the area's many attractions.

Lynn Harris [2006-01-25]

Gay after gay

Brand new sitcom thinks the word "gay" is hysterical

H.H. [2006-01-11]

Homo confidential

From blackmail to fake marriages, Tab Hunter and Rock Hudson led strange double lives as '50s heartthrobs who were secretly gay.

By Laura Miller [2005-10-19]

Queer as folk

Paul Lynde never officially came out -- but the "Hollywood Squares" star was the first TV personality to bring gay humor to the masses.

By Mike Sacks [2005-08-23]

Sex panic

Veteran AIDS activist and playwright Larry Kramer is still denouncing young gay men for spreading HIV through reckless sex and drug use. He needs to drop the angry-prophet pose and start talking to the people on the front lines.

By Richard Kim [2005-05-07]

FDA to gay men: No thanks

George W. Bush's Food and Drug Administration says men who have engaged in gay sex in the last five years shouldn't be anonymous sperm donors.

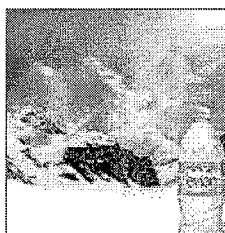
Tim Grieve [2005-05-06]

Microsoft: On message, persuading no one

In explaining away a flip-flop on gay rights, CEO Steve Ballmer repeats the company line. Activist groups aren't amused.

Tim Grieve [2005-04-25]

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Live girl-on-girl action!

Girls making out with each other to turn on guys is the latest craze at high school and college parties. Is this sexual liberation, or regression?

By Whitney Joiner [2006-06-20]

Flickr photo shows lesbians kissing in Tiananmen Square

It's a great picture, but it doesn't mean China is a haven for gay couples.

Lori Leibovich [2006-01-17]

Mike Bloomberg's coming-out story

A lesbian politician welcomes the New York mayor to her team.

Lynn Harris [2006-01-12]

Canada drifts further from the U.S.

Its new law legalizing gay marriage may not lead to a stampede to the altar -- but it highlights how much Canadians dislike self-righteous bigotry.

By Barry Boyce [2005-06-30]

Worth waiting for

Washington is a rare outpost of optimism in gay America, and that may be because the state is moving slowly on same-sex marriage.

By Eli Sanders [2005-05-02]

Paralyzed Broadcasting System

When Bush's education secretary objected to a lesbian couple in a children's cartoon, PBS instantly caved in. Is the network becoming the White House's lap dog?

By Eric Boehlert [2005-02-04]

The Oprah way

To change people's minds on issues like gay marriage, liberals need to learn to tug at their heartstrings.

By Jennifer Buckendorff [2005-01-24]

Babymaking

Jane and I spent 10 years discussing whether to have a child. Like many straight couples, we finally decided to leave it to the fates. But in our case the fates held a speculum, a catheter and a vial of sperm.

By Amie Klempnauer [2004-08-11]

Burning down the Log Cabin

Assailing the "cabal of geniuses" who cooked up the gay marriage ban, one of the GOP's only openly gay leaders breaks with his party.

By Eric Boehlert [2004-06-03]



Straight eye for the queer gals

Why do men love to see women kissing? It's about self-loathing -- and the lusciousness of the female body.

By Charles Taylor [2003-08-27]

Coming out Rosie

Is O'Donnell's admission of her sexual preference a bombshell -- or a no-brainer?

By Mary Elizabeth Williams [2002-02-13]

Why do you think they called them "best boys"?

A new book names names and tells tales as it charts the lasting influence of gays and lesbians on the movie business.

By Douglas Cruickshank [2001-11-08]

The other woman

When my mom split up with my not-mom, Mother's Day lost its charm.

By Molly Hennessy-Fiske [2001-05-10]

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Terrible teasers

Teasers that pander to the lowest common denominator

H.H. [2005-11-29]


Go down, young men!

Sexologist Ian Kerner talks to Salon about his new book, "She Comes First," and why the well-trained tongue is mightier than the "sword."

By Corrie Pikul [2004-06-02]



Hollywood goes down

 A spate of new films -- one with girl-next-door Meg Ryan -- depict graphic oral sex scenes. Is the film industry's portrayal of sexuality finally beginning to get real?

By Rebecca Traister [2003-10-23]



A teen sex guru speaks

Kids -- and their parents -- need to tackle taboos, says psychiatrist Lynn Ponton.

By Amy Benfer [2001-01-10]

The virginity hoax

A federal study reveals the terrible failures inherent in teen vows to chastity.

By Jennifer Foote Sweeney [2001-01-08]



Side-locked but not sidelined

For today's young Hasidic couples, pleasurable sex just might be kosher after all.

By Rebecca Segall [2000-07-06]

Letters to the editor

Should TV be left to liberals? Plus: Is "snacking" less fun for the "snackee"? Holocaust survivor says he owes his life to "sheer luck."

[2000-05-04]

Snacking

If only women would trust men's genuine desire to give oral sex, instead of presuming it's all about intercourse.

By Dylan Edwards [2000-05-02]

Dead senator running?

LBJ's son-in-law Chuck Robb once seemed to be on the fast track to the White House, but these days, he's considered the senator most likely to lose his job in 2000.

By Jake Tapper [1999-11-17]

"Drop 'em, babe!"

I have two words for married twosomes: Oral sex.

By Carol Ormandy [1999-11-16]

Girl talk

Are frank online discussions of blow jobs and masturbation empowering teen girls -- or turning them into Lolitas?

By Janelle Brown [1999-07-28]

Letters to the Editor

Wendy Shalit's new prudery does women no favors; both sexes are changing their attitudes on oral sex; Scientology critics seek protection for free speech.

Letters to the Editor [1999-07-28]

Gen X's change of head

To the women who came of age in the '60s, oral sex was an act of great intimacy. To their daughters, it's about as intimate as shaking hands.

By Shari Thurer [1999-07-21]

Oral Sex (Next)



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